

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
COUNTY OF QUEENS

-----X  
PAUL GILGANNON,

Plaintiff,

-against-

ST. CLARE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
ST. CLARE CATHOLIC ACADEMY, ROMAN  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN, JOHN  
DOE and JANE DOE, RICHARD ROE and JANE  
ROE, priests, clergy and administrators whose  
names are unknown to the Plaintiff,

Defendants.  
-----X

Index No.

Date Purchased:

Plaintiff designates

QUEENS

County as the place of trial.


The basis of the venue is  
Defendants' place of  
business.

**SUMMONS**

To the above named Defendant(s)

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to answer the complaint in this action and to  
serve a copy of your answer, or, if the complaint is not served with this summons, to serve a  
notice of appearance, on the Plaintiff's Attorney within 20 days after the service of this  
summons, exclusive of the day of service (or within 30 days after the service is complete if this  
summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York); and in case of your  
failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief  
demanded in the complaint.

Dated: New York, New York  
September 30, 2019

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL G. DOWD  
600 Third Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
(212) 751-1640

SWEENEY, REICH & BOLZ, LLP

By: Gerard J. Sweeney, Esq.

1981 Marcus Avenue, Suite 200

Lake Success, NY 11042

(718) 459-9000

Attorneys for Plaintiff

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
COUNTY OF QUEENS

-----X  
PAUL GILGANNON,

Plaintiff,

Index No.  
Date Filed:

-against-

ST. CLARE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
ST. CLARE CATHOLIC ACADEMY, ROMAN  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN, JOHN  
DOE and JANE DOE, RICHARD ROE and JANE  
ROE, priests, clergy and administrators whose  
names are unknown to the Plaintiff,

**VERIFIED COMPLAINT**

Defendants.  
-----X

Plaintiff, Paul Gilgannon, by his attorney, Michael G. Dowd, complaining of Defendants,  
hereby alleges the following:

**JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

1. This action is timely commenced pursuant to the New York State Child Victims Act, dated February 14, 2019, and CPLR § 214-g.
2. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to CPLR § 301 as Defendants' principal place of business is in New York and because much of the unlawful conduct complained of herein occurred in New York.
3. Venue is proper pursuant to CPLR § 503 because Queens County is where many of the events giving rise to this action occurred.

**AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:**

**NEGLIGENT SUPERVISION**

4. The Plaintiff, Paul Gilgannon (hereinafter "Plaintiff") was born on February 25, 1965. He is a resident of Long Beach, New York.

5. Plaintiff is a Roman Catholic and was a parishioner at Defendant ST. CLARE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (hereinafter "ST. CLARE"), which is a parish within the Defendant ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN. ST. CLARE is located in Rosedale, New York, which is in Queens County.
6. Upon information and belief, Defendant ST. CLARE CATHOLIC ACADEMY, formerly known as ST. CLARE'S SCHOOL, is at all material times, a parochial school operated by Defendant ST. CLARE. Defendant ST. CLARE CATHOLIC ACADEMY is located in Rosedale, New York, which is in Queens County.
7. Plaintiff was baptized, confirmed, attended mass, and received his sacraments through the Roman Catholic Church.
8. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, the ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN (hereinafter "DIOCESE") was and is a not-for-profit religious corporation organized and existing around and under by virtue of the laws of the State of New York. Its principal headquarters are located in Brooklyn, New York, which is in Kings County.
9. Upon information and belief, Nicholas Anthony DiMarzio (hereinafter "DiMarzio") is currently the Roman Catholic Bishop of the DIOCESE.
10. Upon information and belief, DiMarzio is the Chief Executive Officer of all parishes and parish schools in the DIOCESE.
11. Upon information and belief, all of DiMarzio's predecessor(s) were the Chief Executive Officers of all parishes and schools in the DIOCESE and as part of said responsibilities assigned the individuals to work in the parishes and schools, including James Collins (hereinafter "Collins"). This includes those Bishops who



assigned Collins to his parish and school positions.

12. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, DiMarzio and the above referenced predecessor Bishops in the Office of the Bishop along with Defendant DIOCESE created the policies and procedures to be followed by priests within the DIOCESE. The Office of the Bishop and Defendant DIOCESE were responsible for investigating complaints against its parish clergy. In this capacity, the Office of the Bishop either directly or through Diocesan officials appointed by them, established policies and procedures by which complaints of sexual abuse against parish clergy, priests, and staff were to be dealt with and investigated by the DIOCESE.
13. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, the Office of the Bishop was also responsible for removing and/or suspending parish clergy and priests from their duties.
14. Upon information and belief, at all times relevant, the Office of the Bishop and Defendant DIOCESE were in charge of supervising all Catholic schools within its geographical boundaries, including the school at ST. CLARE and developed and approved the curriculum, both religious and secular, for all these schools.
15. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, the Office of the Bishop and Defendant DIOCESE also appointed the school principals and controlled the hiring and training of the teachers in its schools.
16. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, Collins was a priest at Defendant ST. CLARE having been assigned and otherwise authorized to work there by the Office of the Bishop.

17. Upon information and belief, Defendant ST. CLARE is a Roman Catholic parish church within the DIOCESE.
18. Collins' abuse of Plaintiff occurred in approximately 1977. The abuse included, but was not limited to Collins instructing Plaintiff to remove his clothes, Collins photographing Plaintiff wearing only his underwear, and Collins massaging Plaintiff's body while Collins masturbated himself. The abuse occurred in Defendant ST. CLARE's rectory. Plaintiff estimates the abuse occurred on at least three dozen occasions.
19. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, Defendant DIOCESE knew or should have known that children such as Plaintiff were present in parish rectories for a variety of purposes, including counseling and work.
20. Upon information and belief, sometime in 2019 a list of those credibly accused of child sexual abuse was released by the DIOCESE, Collins was included on that list.
21. The fact that Collins was included on that list of credibly accused priests is an admission by Defendant DIOCESE that Collins sexually abused minors.
22. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was taught and otherwise informed by Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE by word and deed that he should obey, trust, and respect the DIOCESE, ST. CLARE, and Collins.
23. Upon information and belief, since at least 1950 through present, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE knew the risk of sexual abuse of minor parishioners and students by priests and other staff working in the DIOCESE.

24. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE knew that minors sexually abused in the Catholic Church would suffer psychological and emotional injuries, as well as other damages.
25. Upon information and belief, at all times mentioned herein, Defendant DIOCESE aided and abetted the concealment of criminal conduct by failing and refusing to report allegations of child sexual abuse to appropriate New York civil authorities.
26. Upon information and belief, at the time of the acts alleged herein, Collins was an employee of, and acting as an agent of Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE.
27. Upon information and belief, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE had a duty to protect Plaintiff as a minor parishioner and student from Collins' criminal sexual acts.
28. Upon information and belief, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE failed to adequately and completely supervise Collins, and as a result of this failure and negligence, proximately caused Plaintiff to be sexually abused by Collins.
29. The aforementioned occurrences of sexual abuse were caused by the negligence, carelessness, recklessness, and the willful, wanton, reckless and grossly negligent conduct of Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE and their agents, servants, and/or employees, in failing to properly and adequately supervise the conduct of Collins as it related to Plaintiff.
30. By reason of the foregoing, Plaintiff sustained physical and psychological injuries, including but not limited to, severe emotional distress, confusion, humiliation, fright, anxiety, a severe shock to his nervous system, and has been



caused to suffer physical pain and mental anguish, emotional and psychological damages as a result thereof, and, upon information and belief, some or all of these injuries are of a permanent and lasting nature; and as a result Plaintiff has become and will continue to be obligated to expend sums of money for medical expenses for treatment of said maladies.

31. That by reason of the foregoing, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE are also liable to Plaintiff for punitive and exemplary damages.
32. It is hereby alleged pursuant to CPLR 1603 that the foregoing cause of action is exempt from the operation of CPLR 1601 by reason of one or more of the exemptions provided in CPLR 1602, including but not limited to, CPLR 1602(7) and 1602(11).
33. That the amount of damages sought exceeds the jurisdictional limits of all lower courts, which would otherwise have jurisdiction.

**AS AND FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION:**

**NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO WARN**

34. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation contained in the above paragraphs of this Complaint, with the same force and effect as if fully set forth at length herein.
35. Upon information and belief, prior to and at all times herein mentioned, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE and their agents, servants, and employees, knew or should have known that Collins violated DIOCESE and ST. CLARE's relevant rules, regulations and protocols prohibiting priests like Collins from sexually abusing and otherwise harming minor parishioners and students,



including Plaintiff.

36. The Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE and their agents, servants, and employees were negligent, careless and reckless and acted willfully, wantonly and were grossly negligent in failing to warn Plaintiff that the failure of Collins to abide by DIOCESE and ST. CLARE's rules, regulations and protocols regarding prohibitions on employees being alone with minor parishioners and students put Plaintiff at risk for being sexually abused by Collins.
37. By reason of the foregoing, Plaintiff sustained physical and psychological injuries, including but not limited to, severe emotional distress, confusion, humiliation, fright, anxiety, a severe shock to his nervous system, and has been caused to suffer physical pain and mental anguish, emotional and psychological damages as a result thereof, and, upon information and belief, some or all of these injuries are of a permanent and lasting nature; and as a result Plaintiff has become and will continue to be obligated to expend sums of money for medical expenses for treatment of said maladies.
38. That by reason of the foregoing, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE are also liable to Plaintiff for punitive and exemplary damages.
39. It is hereby alleged pursuant to CPLR 1603 that the foregoing cause of action is exempt from the operation of CPLR 1601 by reason of one or more of the exemptions provided in CPLR 1602, including but not limited to, CPLR 1602(7) and 1602(11).
40. That the amount of damages sought exceeds the jurisdictional limits of all lower courts, which would otherwise have jurisdiction.

**AS AND FOR A THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION:**

**NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT**


41. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation contained in the above paragraphs of this Complaint, with the same force and effect as if fully set forth at length herein.
42. The Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE assumed a duty to protect the safety and welfare of Plaintiff as more fully set forth above, when Plaintiff participated as a parishioner in ST. CLARE related activities such as attending the parish school, confession, and counseling. This duty imposed upon said Defendants, the duty to provide a reasonably safe and secure environment for Plaintiff while he was participating in parish programs.
43. When Plaintiff was in said Defendants' care, said Defendants failed to exercise the degree of care that a reasonably prudent parent would have exercised under similar circumstances.
44. Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE and their agents and employees were negligent, careless and reckless and acted willfully, wantonly and were grossly negligent in failing to provide a safe and secure environment for Plaintiff while he participated as a minor in parish programs and as such was sexually abused by Collins.
45. By reason of the foregoing, Plaintiff sustained physical and psychological injuries, including but not limited to, severe emotional distress, confusion, humiliation, fright, anxiety, a severe shock to his nervous system, and has been

caused to suffer physical pain and mental anguish, emotional and psychological damages as a result thereof, and, upon information and belief, some or all of these injuries are of a permanent and lasting nature; and as a result Plaintiff has become and will continue to be obligated to expend sums of money for medical expenses for treatment of said maladies.

46. That by reason of the foregoing, Defendants DIOCESE and ST. CLARE are also liable to Plaintiff for punitive and exemplary damages.
47. It is hereby alleged pursuant to CPLR 1603 that the foregoing cause of action is exempt from the operation of CPLR 1601 by reason of one or more of the exemptions provided in CPLR 1602, including but not limited to, CPLR 1602(7) and 1602(11).
48. That the amount of damages sought exceeds the jurisdictional limits of all lower courts, which would otherwise have jurisdiction.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants, together with compensatory and punitive damages, and the interest, costs and disbursements pursuant to the causes of action herein.

Dated: New York, New York  
September 30, 2019



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MICHAEL G. DOWD  
600 Third Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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(212) 751-1640

SWEENEY, REICH & BOLZ, LLP  
By: Gerard J. Sweeney, Esq.  
1981 Marcus Avenue, Suite 200  
Lake Success, NY 11042  
(718) 459-9000

Attorneys for Plaintiff




**VERIFICATION BY ATTORNEY**

MICHAEL G. DOWD, an attorney being duly admitted before the courts of the State of New York, hereby affirms the following under penalties of perjury:

That he is an attorney for the Plaintiff in the above-entitled action with offices located at 600 Third Ave, New York, New York; that he has read the foregoing VERIFIED COMPLAINT and knows the contents thereof; that the same is true to his knowledge, except as to the matters stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and that as to those matters he believes them to be true.

That the reason why this verification is made by deponent instead of Plaintiff is because Plaintiff is not within the County of New York where deponent has his office. Deponent further says that the grounds of his belief as to all matters in the VERIFIED COMPLAINT not stated to be upon his knowledge are based upon conversations with the Plaintiff and other writings relevant to this action.

Dated: New York, New York  
September 30, 2019

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL G. DOWD  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
600 Third Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
(212) 751-1640